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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 BUENOS AIRES 7145

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, AIFLD, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT: ASSESSMENT AND COMMENTS

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 6597 (B) BUENOS AIRES 7064

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. REFTEL B, WHICH REPORTS ILGWU PRESIDENT SOL CHAIKIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE, IS A GOOD SUMMARY INTRODUCTION TO THE RESULTS OF THE AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY TEAM'S 2 1/2 DAY VISIT TO BUENOS AIRES, SEPTEMBER 6-8. WE BELIEVE THAT THE VISIT WAS A SUCCESS IN TERMS OF DEMONSTRATING THE AFL-CIO'S SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARGENTINE UNION MOVEMENT AND IN INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE GOA, EVEN THOUGH NO SUBSTANTIALLY POSITIVE, IMMEDIATE RESULTS CAN BE EXPECTED AND, IN FACT, THE SHORT TERM PROSPECTS REMAIN BLEAK. THE

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VISIT TO SOME DEGREE WAS COMPLICATED BY AN INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN LABOR CENTRAL DELEGATION WHICH VISITED THE COUNTRY THE WEEK BEFORE AND WHOSE RESULTS WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE AFL-CIO. THE LOCAL CLAT REPRESENTATIVE HAS HAILED THE TWO VISITS AS BEING OF "HISTORIC IMPORTANCE" IN THE STRUGGLE TO REESTABLISH TRADE UNION LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO ARGENTINA. THE SUCCESS OF THE AFL-CIO MISSION WAS IN NO SMALL MEASURE DUE TO THE PERSONAL

DYNAMISM AND COMMITMENT OF DELEGATION LEADER CHAIKIN WHO CAME ACROSS AS A TOUGH, AUTHENTIC UNION LEADER GENUINELY INTERESTED IN HELPING THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE AFL-CIO TEAM AVOIDED THE PITFALLS WHICH BEFELL THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) MISSION LAST FEBRUARY. THAT VIST WAS ESSENTIALLY A FACT-FINDING AND NEGOTIATING EXPEDITION. PLAYING OUT THE ROLE EXPECTED OF THE CHIEF OF A CONFEDERAL INTERNATIONAL LABOR CENTER, ICFTU'S OTTO KERSTEN CAME TO PRESSURE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES INTO RESTORING TRADE UNION LIBERTIES TO THE ICFTU'S ARGENTINE AFFILIATE LABOR UNION MOVEMENT. AS WE SAID ON THAT OCCASION, THE LION DEPARTED THE COUNTRY LOOKING LIKE A LAMB, EVIDENTLY CHARMED BY PRESIDENT VIDELA AND ADMIRAL MASSERA'S PROMISES THAT IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR THE BETTER WERE ON THE WAY. THEIR EXPECTATIONS HAVING BEEN RAISED BEYOND REASON BY THE VISIT, THE ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS FELT LET DOWN WHEN KERSTEN APPEARED TO BE TAKEN IN BY THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPTY PROMISES.

3. THE AFL-CIO VISITORS TOOK A DIFFERENT TACK. AS REPRESENTATIVES OF A FRATERNAL FOREIGN NATIONAL CENTER, THE AMERICANS CAME PRINCIPALLY TO RENEW CONTACTS AND TO DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR ARGENTINE TRADE UNION BROTHERS. THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE PLAYED DOWN RELATIVELY. IT IS WELL THAT THEY WERE, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT YET PREPARED TO MAKE ANY OF THE MAJOR CONCESSIONS WHICH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT WANTS.

4. THAT THE AFL-CIO TEAM WAS PRECEDED A WEEK EARLIER BY THE VISIT TO ARGENTINA OF A JOINT WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR/LATIN AMERICAN CENTRAL OF WORKERS (WCL-CLAT) DELEGATION WAS BOTH AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE. INSPIRED BY LABOR MINISTRY SPOKESMEN, THE MEDIA TREATED THE WCL-CLAT COLDLY (FOR HAVING INSPIRED RESOLUTIONS IN THE ILO AGAINST ARGENTINA AND FOR HAVING PROVIDED PROTECTION TO THE MILITANTLY ANTI-GOA EXILE LABOR LEADER, RAIMUNDO ONGARO). ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESS AT FIRST WELCOMED THE AFL-CIO VISIT, INTERPRETING IT AS PART OF A SERIES OF OFFICIAL U.S. MANEUVERS (TODMAN, DERIAN, CODELS, ETC.) BEING ORCHESTRATED WITH THE INTENT OF IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS-- AT LEAST UP TILL THE MOMENT THEY GOT WIND OF THE MESSAGE SOL CHAIKIN WAS SENDING AROUND TOWN.

5. CLAT SOURCES MAINTAIN THAT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS THEIR MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE FRANK AND CORDIAL. THEY WERE EVEN ALLOWED -- QUIETLY -- TO VISIT SELECTED UNION CORELIGIONARIES IN TWO DIFFERENT JAILHOUSES -- A REQUEST WHICH THE AFL-CIO ALSO MADE AND WAS DENIED. THE CHRISTAIN LABOR GROUP WAITED UNTIL THE LAST DAY BEFORE ISSUING A FORMAL CONDEMNATORY

STATEMENT OF WHAT THEY HAD FOUND IN ARGENTINA. THE COMMUNIQUE
UPSET THE LABOR MINISTRY GREATLY BECAUSE IT COULD HAVE UNLEASHED
A NEW WAVE OF CRITICISM FROM HARDLINE MILITARY SECTORS AGAINST
THE MINISTRY FOR HAVING ALLOWED THE VISIT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
THUS, MINISTRY OFFICIALS WERE THROWN INTO A MOMENTARY TIZZY ON THE
EVE OF THE AFL-CIO'S ARRIVAL, FEARING PERHAPS THAT THE WORST WAS YET
TO COME.

6. THIS MAY EXPLAIN THE FACT THAT ASIDE FROM THE UNEVEN PRESS
TREATMENT, THE TWO MISSIONS HAD ABOUT THE SAME EXPOSURE TO
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. BOTH DELEGATIONS MET WITH THE CGT
INTERVENTOR AND THE LABOR MINISTER. WCL-CLAT WAS DENIED
PERMISSION TO SEE PRESIDENT VIDELA AND, UNFORTUNATELY, VIDELA
LEFT THE COUNTRY (FOR THE U.S.) THE DAY THE AFL-CIO TEAM
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ARRIVED. A REQUESTED MEETING WITH ACTING PRESIDENT DIAZ
BESSONE NEVER MATERIALIZED. THIS WOULD NOT HAVE SERVED ANY
USEFUL PURPOSE ANYWAY, EXCEPT AS A MINOR FEAT OF ONES
UPMANSHIP OVER WCF-CLAT. THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNIONISTS
WANTED BADLY TO SEE A VIDELA SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON
WITH GEORGE MEANY, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT MR. MEANY REJECTED
THIS ON GROUNDS OF PRINCIPLE.

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7. BEST THAT WE CAN TELL, THE WCL-CLAT AND AFL-CIO DELEGATIONS HAD ABOUT THE SAME DEGREE OF EXPOSURE TO UNION LEADERS IN BUENOS AIRES--MAXIMUM AUDIENCES BEING IN THE AREA OF 150 SPECTATORS. ONE POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE WAS THAT THE WCL-CLAT (THEY CLAIM) HELD OPEN DOOR DISCUSSIONS IN ALL CASES AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONE OF THEIR SESSIONS ENDED IN AN EMOTIONAL OUTBURST OF SINGING "LOS MUCHACHOS PERONISTAS." THE WCL GROUP ALSO SPENT MORE TIME IN ARGENTINA--UPWARDS OF A WEEK. THEY VISITED CORDOBA AND, WE GATHER, HELD A WELL-ATTENDED TRADE UNION MEETING THERE. THE AFL-CIO ABIDED BY THE RULE LAID DOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO HOLD HUGE RALLIES WHICH MIGHT TAKE ON THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A PLENARY SESSION -- SOMETHING THE GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED THE MOVEMENT THESE PAST 17 MONTHS. THIS REQUIREMENT ALSO COINCIDED WITH THE WISHES OF THE COMMITTEE OF 25 UNION LEADERS WHICH HOSTED THE AFL-CIO VISIT. THE COMMITTEE, TO SOME DEGREE INFLUENCED BY GOVERNMENT PRESSURES BUT ALSO BY MORE ORDINARY CONFIDENTIAL

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PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF LEADERSHIP AMBITION, WANTED SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO TO TAKE PLACE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.

8. WE SUSPECT THAT, WHETHER CLAT HELD OPEN DOOR SESSIONS OR NOT, THE TURNOUT FOR THEM WAS ABOUT THE SAME AS THAT OF THE AFL-CIO, ESPECIALLY AS THE COMMITTEE OF 25 ACTED AS OFFICIAL HOSTS FOR THE WCL-CLAT MISSION AS WELL. MOREOVER, WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IN MOST MINDS THE AFL-CIO WAS NOT CONSIDERED THE MORE IMPORTANT OF THE TWO IN TERMS OF THE RELATIVE PRESSURES WHICH THE TWO LABOR ORGANIZATIONS CAN BRING TO BEAR ON THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. DESPITE STRONG VESTIGES OF TRADITIONAL NATIONALISM IN THE PERONIST LABOR MOVEMENT AND APPARENTLY IMPORTANT INROADS WHICH CLAT HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE IN RECENT YEARS, THE AFL-CIO IS HIGHLY RESPECTED IN THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT FOR THE POLITICAL CLOUT AND, WHAT'S MORE, FOR THE STRONG STAND WHICH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

9. MOREOVER, WE THINK THE AFL-CIO'S PROCEDURE OF GIVING WEIGHT TO THE 25 MECHANISM AND OF TRYING TO WORK THROUGH THEM WAS A CORRECT MOVE. HOWEVER, IMPERFECTLY THEY MAY HAVE BEEN SELECTED IN THE CURRENT SEMI-CLANDESTINE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE COMMITTEE IS SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF BOTH THE INTERVENED AND NONINTERVENED AND VIRTUALLY ALL SHADES OF PERONIST LABOR THOUGHT ARE REFLECTED. IT IS THE ONLY BODY

PURPORTING TO REPRESENT THE LABOR MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE DURING THE CURRENT PERIOD OF SUSPENSION OF LABOR ACTIVITIES. IT WAS INEVITABLE, BECAUSE OF PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND JEALOUSIES, THAT NOT ALL THE UNION LEADERS OUTSIDE THE 25 BOARD WOULD BE CONTACTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS--AND SOME CRITICISM HAS BEEN HEARD IN THIS VEIN--BUT THIS IS DIFFICULT TO AVOID ENTIRELY, EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES.
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10. THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE COMMITTEE OF 25'S PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE EX-LIGHT AND POWER LEADER JUAN JOSE TACCONE AND EX/UOM (METAL WORKER) AND EX-CGT BOARD MEMBER ALBERTO CAMPOS FROM THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE DESERVES FURTHER INQUIRY. THE MOST SIMPLE REASON WAS THAT THE TWO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. HOWEVER, CAMPOS PARTICULARLY WAS A TARGET, WE SUSPECT, BECAUSE HE IS WIDELY REGARDED AS BEING A STAND-IN FOR THE JAILED FORMER TOP LABOR BOSS, LORENZO MIGUEL. UNDER MIGUEL'S LEADERSHIP, THE UOM WAS THE NERVE-CENTER OF THE "62 ORGANIZATIONS" POLITICAL MACHINERY SUPPORTING MRS. PERON'S REGIME WHILE IT LASTED. THE HISTORY OF DISAFFECTION OF THE "GROUP OF EIGHT" AND "INDEPENDENTS" FROM THIS POLITICAL MACHINE IS CLOSELY TIED TO THE STORY OF THE MILITARY COUP AGAINST THE PERONIST GOVERNMENT IN MARCH 1976, WHICH WAS FACILITATED BY THE MILITARY'S ABILITY TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE ANTIVERTICALIST LABOR LEADERS IN THE CONSPIRACY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ATTEMPT TO COLD-SHOULDER CAMPOS AND TACCONE DURING THE AFL-CIO VISIT WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY GUIDED BY GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICERS WHO STILL HAVE SOME OF THE REMAINING LEADERS DELUDED INTO BELIEVING THAT THEY WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS BUT MAY EVEN EVENTUALLY INHERIT THE TOP CGT POSITIONS VACATED BY THE LEADERS WHOSE MANDATES THIS GOVERNMENT HAS TERMINATED. WE HAD THOUGHT THAT, TO A DEGREE, THESE OLD RIVALRIES HAD BEEN PUT ASIDE AS A RESULT OF GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE COLD REALITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S LABOR POLICIES. INDEED, THE FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF 25, WHICH INCLUDES FIVE LEADERS OF INTERVENED UNIONS (BUT NOT UOM) AND THE DECISION NOT TO FIELD A WORKER DELEGATION TO THE ILO CONFERENCE LAST JUNE, HAVE BEEN SEEN AS EVIDENCE OF A GROWING UNITY OF THE NONINTERVENED AND INTERVENED CAMPS AND A SENSE OF FATALISM WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS. WE THINK THIS TREND TOWARDS REALIZING THAT THEY ARE ALL IN THE SAME SINKING BOAT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW--ESPECIALLY AS MORE LEADERS ARE PRESSURED INTO RESIGNING FROM THEIR UNION POSTS--BUT THE INCIDENT INVOLVING CAMPOS (WHICH INCIDENTALLY CAMPOS SEEMED INPervIOUS TO, AS HE
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PARTICIPATED IN ALL EVENTS ANYWAY) SHOWS THAT THE GOVERNMENT
RETAINS A SUBSTANTIAL CAPACITY TO MANIPULATE TRADE UNION
LEADERS AGAINST EACH OTHER.

11. THE EMBASSY FELL AFOUL OF THE INTERVENED VS. NONINTERVENED
ISSUE INCIDENTALLY WHEN LABOR MINISTER LIENDO AND ARMY CHIEF OF
STAFF GENERAL VIOLA DECLINED TO ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO LUNCH
WITH THE AFL-CIO DELEGATION IN THE COMPANY OF EX-AS WELL AS
CURRENT ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS. (LIENDO AND HIS
ENTOURAGE EAGERLY ACCEPTED A HURRIEDLY PUT-TOGETHER SUBSTITUTE
EVENT AS THE RESIDENCE TO WHICH NO LOCAL LABOR LEADERS WERE
INVITED). WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY UNHAPPY ABOUT OUR UNSUCCESSFUL
EFFORT TO GET THE ARMY GENERALS TO SIT DOWN AND BREAK BREAD
WITH LEADERS WHOSE MANDATES THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRUNCATED. WE
WERE ABLE TO GET ACROSS THE POINT THAT WE DO NOT NECESSARILY

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ACCEPT GOVERNMENT FIAT AS FAIT ACCOMPLI-- AND WE DID SO WITHOUT
SUBSTANTIALLY ALIENATING EITHER LIENDO OR VIOLA.

12. NOT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 25 CAME OUT TO MEET
THE AFL-CIO. BY OUR COUNT, TEN WERE ABSENT, WE THINK, MOSTLY

BECAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT PRESSURES HANGING OVER THE LABOR MOVEMENT. MUNICIPAL WORKER LEADER GERONIMO IZZETA IS REPORTED ILL, HEALTH UNION LEADER OTTO CALACE PERHAPS STAYED AWAY BECAUSE HIS SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAD JUST BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES, AND TOBACCO EMPLOYEE LEADER ROBERTO DIGON LEFT THE COUNTRY OVER A MONTH AGO ON A CLAT SCHOLARSHIP ALONG WITH HIS WIFE (A TELEPHONE UNION LEADER IN HER OWN RIGHT) WHO RECENTLY WAS RELEASED FROM PROLONGED DETENTION FOR BEING A MONTONERO SUSPECT. SODA FACTORY UNION LEADER JUAN RACCHINI (WHO EVIDENTLY IS NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE 25) WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT. SO WAS EX-GASTRONOMIC LEADER RAMON ELORZA (ALSO A NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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MEMBER), WHO WE NOW PRESUME SHOULD BE CATALOGUED AS LIVING IN EXILE ABROAD. PERHAPS IT IS REMARKABLE THAT SO MANY LEADERS DID PARTICIPATE. AMONG THOSE WHO DESERVE SPECIAL MENTION ARE COMMERCIAL WORKER LEADER FLORENCIO CARRANZA, WHO WAS IN THE FINAL STAGES OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO HANG ONTO HIS JOB; TRUCK DRIVER HEAD RICARDO PEREZ, WHO WAS FORCED TO RESIGN BY THE GOVERNMENT (A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE AFL-CIO VISIT) ON HIS RETURN FROM THE ITF CONGRESS IN DUBLIN BECAUSE OF THE CONGRESS' BLANKET CONDEMNATION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENTS; AND PAPER UNION LEADER FERNANDO DONAIRES, WHO HAD TAKEN ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FROM HIS UNION FOLLOWING A THREATENING VISIT FROM MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS.

13. A DAY OR TWO FOLLOWING THE AFL-CIO TEAM'S DEPARTURE FROM BUENOS AIRES, THE PRESS REPORTED CARRANZA AND PEREZ' RESIGNATIONS. INEVITABLY IN SOME MINDS THESE RESIGNATIONS BECAME LINKED TO THE VISIT, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY ACCURATE. NOR IS IT LIKELY THAT TEACHER UNION (CTERA) LEADER ALFREDO BRAVO'S ABDUCTION (THE DAY AFTER HE AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HAD MET WITH THE AFL-CIO) WAS PRECIPITATED BY THE AFL-CIO MEETING. (HE HAS SINCE BEEN RESURFACED AND IS NOW UNDER OFFICIAL ARREST). NEVERTHELESS, THESE INCIDENTS ARE CHALKED UP IN WORKERS' MINDS AS NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURED SUBSEQUENT TO THE AFL-CIO VISIT AND, THEREFORE, AS EVIDENCE OF THE VISITORS' INABILITY TO TURN THE GOVERNMENT AROUND.

14. HOWEVER, THIS PENCHANT FOR LINKAGES CAN CUT BOTH WAYS. FOLLOWING THE AFL-CIO'S VISIT, DONAIRES DECIDED TO DEFY THE AUTHORITIES BY WALKING BACK INTO HIS UNION HALL AND REASSUMING HIS DUTIES. ALSO, A PROMINENT TRADE UNION LEADER WAS RELEASED FROM EXECUTIVE POWER CUSTODY ON THE DAY OF CHAIKIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE. THIS, OF COURSE, SERVES TO WHIP UP HOPES FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION PROVIDING FURTHER RELIEF. CONFIDENTIAL

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15. NOTWITHSTANDING THE UNREALIZABLE, UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS IMPOSED ON THE AFL-CIO TEAM BY THEIR ARGENTINE COLLEAGUES IN TERMS OF HOPED-FOR IMMEDIATE CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICY, THE MISSION WAS A SUCCESS IN REESTABLISHING TIES WITH THE LOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT. THE HIGH QUALITY OF THE TEAM WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR, ESPECIALLY SOL CHAIKIN WHO CAME ACROSS AS A SINCERE, TOUGH-TALKING, GENUINE LABOR LEADER OF THE FIRST ORDER. ONE LOCAL LEADER, ROBERTO GARCIA (TAXIS), TOLD US THAT UNTIL HE HEARD CHAIKIN'S RIP-SNORTING EXTEMPORANEOUS ADDRESS AT THE SANITATION WORKERS HALL HE THOUGHT THE AFL-CIO WAS NOT SINCERELY INTERESTED IN ENDURING TIES WITH THE ARGENTINES. AFTER THAT FIERY SPEECH, GARCIA SAID HE WAS HOOKED. EVEN CLAT REPRESENTATIVES TOLD US HOW IMPRESSED THEY WERE BY CHAIKIN.

16. NEARLY AS WE CAN TELL FROM A SINGLE CONVERSATION AT THE LABOR MINISTRY, OUR RELATIONS ARE STILL INTACT. THE MISSION'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LABOR MINISTER BEHIND CLOSED DOORS WERE HARD AND TOUGH AND LACED WITH A HEALTHY DOSE OF ICY NEW YORK HUMOUR. LIENDO TOOK IT ALL LIKE A GOOD SOLDIER. EITHER HIS EAR FOR ENGLISH WAS INSUFFICIENT TO CATCH THE SARCASM OR ELSE HE MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT NOT TO MAR THE PROSPECTS FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS AT A MOMENT WHEN HIS PRESIDENT WAS EMBARKED ON A PROMISING MISSION TO WASHINGTON. LABOR UNDERSECRETARY (NAVY CAPTAIN) DALL'ASTA EVEN APPEARED PLEASED WITH THE AFL-CIO VISIT. HE NOTED THAT CHAIKIN HAD RAISED MANY OF THE SAME POINTS AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WCL HAD INCLUDED IN ITS COMMUNIQUE, BUT CHAIKIN HAD DONE IT IN A LESS OFFENSIVE WAY. (WE THOUGHT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS PARTICULARLY WELL DONE. THE ONLY CRITICISM HEARD WAS THAT THERE WAS NO MENTION OF THE WAGE PROBLEM.) DALL'ASTA ALSO SAID HE HAD NOT HEARD ANY COMPLAINTS FROM MILITARY QUARTERS (BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS MAY NOT ALL BE IN YET). DALL'ASTA ALSO STATED THAT THE TRADE UNION REFORM BILL WAS TIED UP--ALMOST HOPELESSLY--IN THE MILITARY COMMANDS. WHILE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES (INCLUDING TRADE UNION PERSONALITY ONLY FOR FIRST-DEGREE UNIONS) CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE JUNTA AND ARE NOW ACCEPTED BY ALL, THERE IS A DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE MILITARY OVER THE TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS, I.E. WHEN AND HOW THE NEW RULES SHOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT. HE ADMITTED THAT SOME OF THE SERVIES MAY JUST BE STALLING FOR TIME.

17. WHAT DALL'ASTA NEGLECTED TO TELL US WAS THAT THE LABOR MINISTER ISSUED A WARNING TO THE MEDIA WITHIN TWO HOURS AFTER THE PRESS CONFERENCE HAD ENDED ADVISING THEM TO EXERCISE DUE CAUTION AS TO WHAT WAS FIT TO PRINT. THE RESULT WAS THAT

CHAIKIN'S REMARKS WERE TONED DOWN IN MOST PAPERS AND RECEIVED ONLY SCANT ATTENTION IN OTHERS. (NEWSCLIPS BEING POUCHED TO AIFLD'S DOHERTY, AS REQUESTED). SINCE THE AFL-CIO'S DEPARTURE, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME WHIFFS OF CRITICISM IN THE CAPTIVE OR ANTI-LABOR PRESS. ONE UNFRIENDLY INTERPRETATION THAT HAS EMERGED SEES THE AFL-CIO/PERONIST RECONCILIATION AS AN IRONICAL BETRAYAL OF SOMEBODY'S PRINCIPLES--EITHER THE AFL-CIO FOR ALLEGEDLY FORGETTING ITS COMMITMENT TO TRADE UNION

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DEMOCRACY OR THE PERONISTS FOR FORGETTING THEIR NATIONALIST HERITAGE. THERE ALSO WAS SOME UNHAPPINESS IN UNION CIRCLES OVER A STATEMENT MADE INFORMALLY TO THE PRESS AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE BY ONE OF THE DELEGATION MEMBERS. IN CATEGORIC AND ALMOST GLEEFUL TERMS THE AFL-CIO'S PULLOUT OF THE ILO WAS REPORTEDLY CONFIRMED, WHICH SOME HERE FOUND UPSETTING AS THE ILO IS SEEN AS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN THE STRUGGLE TO GET THE GOVERNMENT TO REESTABLISH UNION LIBERTIES. ONE VERSION CURRENTLY MAKING ITS ROUNDS IN THE PRESS IS THAT THE AFL-CIO IS PLANNING A NEW TRADE UNION CENTRAL IN LATIN AMERICA AS A SEQUEL (SIC) TO ITS DEPARTURE FROM THE ILO.

18. ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE AFL-CIO VISIT SERVED A

VERY USEFUL PURPOSE--NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF THE SENSE OF SOLIDARITY
RESTORED WITH THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT, BUT ALSO AS A MEANS
OF KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE ON THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. EVEN
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THOUGH NO IMMEDIATE POSITIVE RESULTS CAN BE EXPECTED, THE VISIT
SERVED AS A REMINDER TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT CANNOT HOPE TO
GET AWAY OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME WITH THE
CURRENT SUSPENSION OF TRADE UNION LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS
WITHOUT RISKING INCREASINGLY MORE ARTICULATE POLITICAL AND
LABOR OPPOSITION FROM ABROAD.

19. UNION LEADERS APPEAR ENTICED BY CHAIKIN'S PROMISE OF
CONTINUING TIES IN THE FORM OF LABOR GRANTS TO THE U.S. AND
OTHER SUGGESTIONS OF ADDITIONAL FORMS OF SUPPORT. SOME
LEADERS SEEM TO BELIEVE THEY HAVE A COMMITMENT FROM AIFLD TO
FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A LOCAL PERONIST LABOR
INSTITUTE WHICH WOULD FUND HUMAN RIGHTS SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES.
WITHOUT COMMITTING OURSELVES TO ANY PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION,
THE EMBASSY WILL BE INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING AIFLD'S PROPOSALS
AT THE EARLIES OPPORTUNITY AND PRESENTING THEM TO AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE CASTRO FOR HIS CONSIDERATION.
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Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770930/aaaaayux.tel
Line Count: 521
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History: Hold (001 Tobacco) added on 4/16/2009 3:39:05 PM by WASHDCMcGoldRJ, Hold (001 Tobacco) removed on 4/16/2009 3:45:01 PM by WASHDCMcGoldRJ (Litigation Hold Lifted)
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2c5d5e3f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BUENOS AIRES 6597, 77 BUENOS AIRES 7064
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1161907
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT: ASSESSMENT AND COMMENTS
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, AR, US, AFL-CIO, AIFLD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2c5d5e3f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009